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Switchback donated

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the mountainside above the Switchback trail.

"The door is still open on this possibility," Kemmerer said, while indicating that the formal details of the right-of-way transfer would take first priority for the time being.

"We want to get the land donation accomplished by June," Kemmerer said, "in order for people to enjoy full outdoors advantage of the area at the height of the summer season."

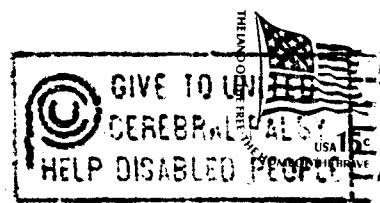
The matter of the Switchback being preserved and protected as a nature and hiking trail has been under study for some time, Kemmerer noted. A planning consultant recommended its preservation; state Senator Frederick Hobbs introduced a resolution

in Harrisburg in support of the idea; the Carbon County Commissioners approved the proposal, and the planning commissions of Jim Thorpe and Summit Hill took steps to endorse it and zone the right of way as a scenic-historical trail.

The Switchback Railroad is described as "the first of any importance in the United States" in a history volume written in 1913. It was unique in that it operated on a gravity principle, hauling anthracite coal from rich Panther Valley veins to Jim Thorpe to be dumped into chutes and then into boats.

The Switchback went into operation for visitors each year about May 30 and ran until the Autumn Leaf excursion in October.

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